

Week 6: MORE
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING
ACTIVITIES for PARENTS



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Understanding & Respecting Self and Others

The Courage to Overcome Failure

Objective:

- Increase awareness of how our shared “fear of failure” responses limit our success
- Encourage children to develop an optimistic, *growth mindset* when facing frustrations and failures.
- Increase children’s strategies for persevering, resilience and improvement or growth

Materials:

- Download the free book, *The Book of Heroic Failures* @:
<https://epdf.pub/queue/the-book-of-heroic-failures-the-official-handbook-of-the-not-terribly-good-club-f3db71a76a8e7e361b3ec3cb0717fcee39167.h>
- Worksheet of famous “*People Who Have Failed but Persevered*”
- Writing Journal

SEL Home Activity:

- Begin by reading one or more short stories from “*The Book of Heroic Failures*”.
- Then share a story about a time in your life when you tried and failed including how you felt at that time. Invite your child to share a similar story from his/her own life in a journal entry.
- Ask, what would you do if you knew you could not fail? Then, brainstorm tactics we all use to avoid failing when in doubt of ourselves (e.g. stomach ache, decide you don’t like it, don’t try hard, etc. etc.)
- Complete the “*People Who Struggled and Failed*” worksheet (attached) and research each to see how many you guessed correctly and what may have led them to be resilient and continue.

Other Possible Family SEL Learning Activities:

- Read a few stories from *The Book of Heroic Failures* each evening for fun.
- Invite other family members (e.g. siblings, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.) to share stories about times they tried and failed at something as well as what others did that was helpful and encouraging or hurtful and discouraging.
- Discuss the meaning of the phrase:

“Resilience is when the belief in oneself exceeds the disbelief of others”

Then, together research on the internet people who have failed or been rejected before they succeeded and how they kept up the courage to bounce back and succeed.

[e.g., Abraham Lincoln, Walt Disney JK Rowling, Theodore Seuss Geisel, Steven King, Oprah Winfrey, Lady Gaga, Charles Darwin, Vera Wang, Vincent Van Gogh, Madonna, Ang Lee, The Beatles, etc.]

People Who Have Failed but Persevered

Match these students to their early school experiences.

Giacomo Puccini

Michael Jordan

Thomas Edison

Pablo Picasso *Henry Ford* *James Watt*

Albert Einstein

Steven Spielberg,

Sir Isaac Newton

Winston Churchill *Alfred Adler*

1. High school teacher told his father he did not have much potential as a student and would be better to quit school and learn to make/repair shoes (i.e. a shoe cobbler).
2. Last four generations of men in his family were highly distinguished musicians (maestros at a cathedral) and family decided he should follow in those footsteps. Early school years marked by frequent expulsions for behavior and parents told to 'give up' as he has no musical talent.
3. Tried out for his 8th grade school basketball team and cut as deemed 'not good enough'. Also cut from making the team in 9th grade. Each time he felt embarrassed and cried. As a high school sophomore (10th grade), he was the last pick for team of 15 on the junior varsity team.
4. Son of a prosperous farmer, he was born tiny and weak and not expected to live. His father, a prosperous farmer, died when he was three. Mother remarried and left him to be raised by his grandmother. Not a particularly strong student, his mother took him out of school at age 12 so he could become a farmer but he proved to be very bad at farming. Later resumed his schooling but only a mediocre student at best
5. A poor student who was always way behind his classmates in all subject areas. Particularly poor in spelling and grammar his whole life. Frequently punished (paddled) for misbehavior and not attending in class,. He overheard principal and teacher describe him at age 10 as "addle minded and would never amount to anything". He then ran away from school and refused to go back.
6. Health problems in childhood prevented him from attending school regularly so largely home schooled by his parents. Wanted to become a maker of mathematical instruments but was denied entry to the profession by the tradesman guild.
7. A poor student who disliked formal schooling but enjoyed art. At age 16, he enrolled in an art school but soon quite going to classes and dropped out.
8. A poor reader throughout his school years usually reading about 2 grade levels below his class. Consequently, he was often teased and bullied by his classmates in school. He dreaded going to school and feared having to read out loud in class. He did go to college but dropped out.
9. The son of a successful farmer, he was always a poor student who never learned to read or spell very well. He left school at age 15 to be an apprentice in a machine shop and worked odd jobs. Father gave him 40 acres to start his own farm but he disliked farming and soon quit.
10. Born into a wealthy family but did not get along with his parents. He maintained a very poor academic record throughout his school years and was considered quite rebellious by teachers. Also, he had speech problems and spoke with a stutter and lisp. Failed his entrance exams for college twice before barely passing on the third try.
11. Almost 5 years old before he learned to talk and still not fluent at age 9. A very poor student in school leaving teachers and parents feeling he might be mentally handicapped. He disliked school and was expelled by his secondary school teacher for having a "bad attitude" and told "you'll never amount to very much". Failing his entrance exams for college, he later got admitted and graduated. But a professor blocked him from getting the usual university assistantship so he had to get a job working as a clerk in a patent office.

ANSWERS

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| <i>Giacomo Puccini</i> | 2 |
| <i>Michael Jordan</i> | 3 |
| <i>Thomas Edison</i> | 5 |
| <i>Pablo Picasso</i> | 7 |
| <i>Henry Ford</i> | 9 |
| <i>James Watt</i> | 6 |
| <i>Albert Einstein</i> | 11 |
| <i>Steven Spielberg</i> | 8 |
| <i>Sir Isaac Newton</i> | 4 |
| <i>Winston Churchill</i> | 10 |
| <i>Alfred Adler</i> | 1 |



Empathy

The Many Faces of Bullying

Objective:

- To understand the various aspects of bullying and its effects
- To learn to identify the role bystanders play in bullying
- To develop strategies for bullying prevention in their school, classroom and communities

Materials:

- Choose an appropriate book which involves bullying behavior among children of your students' age group.(see examples below or ask your librarian for recommendations)
- Handout or slide projection on “*Bullying/Abuse by Motivation and Degree*” (see below)
- T-Charts entitled “The Many Faces of Bullying” (attached)

SEL Home Activity:

Introduction:

- Share your personal experiences of being bullied or picked upon or of observing others being bullied abused or mistreated (from your childhood or as an adult.
- Invite your child to share his/her personal experiences with bully, teasing, etc.
- Discuss how you and others who saw this act responded to the bullying incident?”

Activity:

- Choose a book that deals with bullying (see sample list below or do an internet search for books). And read one chapter at a time.
- Discuss the information on bullying below entitled: **The Many Faces of Bullying** and *Understanding Bullying, Abuse & Maltreatment*.
- As you read the selected book, write on the “*Many Faces of Bullying*” worksheet the names of each book character and discuss what role they chose to take in response to the bullying.
- Discuss how each person felt and what options each had to respond differently.

Closure:

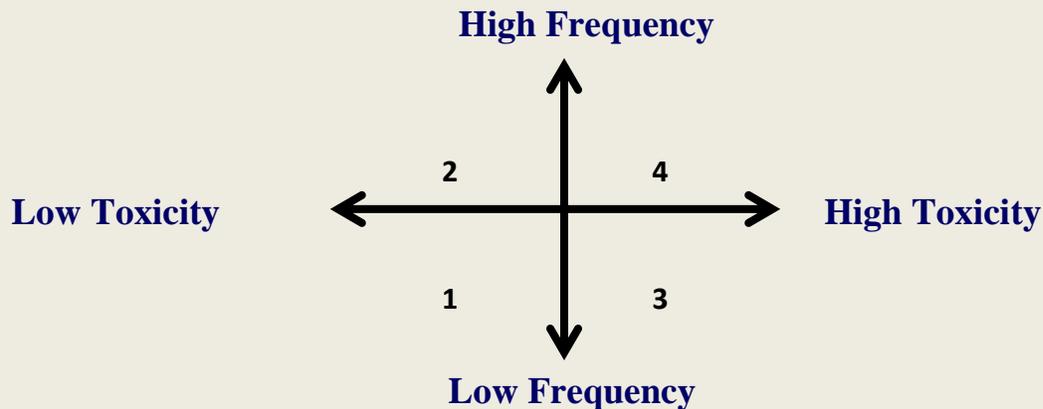
- Discuss how you each felt about every character's behavior and why they may have acted that way.

Other Possible Family SEL Learning Activities:

- Develop “*Bullying Prevention Strategies Chart*” listing together all the options possible for: a) Handling situations if you are being bullied yourself, and b) Responding to situations when you see another person being bullied, abused or mistreated.

Understanding Bullying, Abuse & Maltreatment

Classification by Degree



Frequency

How often such incidents occur.

Toxicity

How painful each incident is to the victim

Types of Bullying:

Physical, Sexual, Verbal, Emotional/Psychological, Neglect/Marginalization,

By Motivational Type

*There are 4 common motivational patterns in bullying or abusive incidents
All of which result in some degree of harm to another person.*

1. **Deliberate/Intentional:** The premeditated and intentional infliction of harm, fear, or pain upon another.
2. **Reactive:** Impulsive responses due to stress, fatigue or inadequate social-emotional competencies such as emotional self-regulation, empathy, and so forth.
3. **Culturally Sanctioned:** Actions that are considered normal or acceptable in a given culture or social environment which inflict harm or adversely affect others.
4. **Neglect/Marginalizing:** Actions which deny another of their primary psychological need for feeling a sense of belonging, acceptance, caring, and respect.



Communication

The Power of Encouragement

Objective:

- To build awareness of the impact of both Negative/Destructive and Positive/Constructive Comments.
- To build awareness of we can encourage and support others in our daily interactions..
- To build supportive/encouraging communication patterns within the family

Materials:

- The Story of Mark Eklund
- Paper with the names of each family member listed (include grandparents, etc.)
- Paper with the names of all your child's classmates listed

SEL Home Activity:

Introduction: Ask, "Have you ever heard someone say something critical or hurtful about you?" How did you feel about yourself? the person who said it?"

This is called *Negative/Destructive Communication*.

Then, ask "Has anyone ever said something positive or encouraging to you? What did they say? How did you feel about yourself? About the person who made the comment?. This is called *Positive/Constructive Communication*.

Note that both types have very powerful effects on others and say a lot about the type of person we are ourselves.

We are going to read a true story about the power of positive/constructive communication.

READ the Mark Eklund story together (attached).

Activity: Provide a paper listing the names of each family member along the left column and then sufficient space for writing comments about each person. Along with your child (bet to involve all family members!) spend a few minutes writing something positive about each and every persona focusing on something you admire, like, appreciate, or enjoy about that family member. i.e., "I like it when you..."; I appreciate it when you..." I like the way you...", "It means a lat to me when you..."!

When done, edit out any negative/destructive comments and discuss how the comments might be hurtful and replace with positive, encouraging comments. . When completed, place the lists somewhere for all to see and read. Send non-household family members their list of encouraging comments.

Closure: Discuss how it felt to express positive/encouraging comments? How did it feel to read the comments about you ? How can we do this in our daily lives in our family?, in school? With our friends?

Other Possible Family SEL Learning Activities:

- Parents can write a Letter of Encouragement to each of their children.(see format below)
- Have your child write positive comments about each classmate and invite ("challenge") other parents to do the same...then share the positive comments.

The Story of Mark: The power of encouragement

It was my first year teaching. And this young boy was in the first third grade class I taught at Saint Mary's School. All 34 of my students were dear to me, but Mark Eklund was one in a million. Very neat in appearance, but with that "happy-to-be-alive attitude that made even his occasional mischievousness delightful.

Mark talked incessantly. I had to remind him again and again that talking without permission was not acceptable. What impressed me so much though was his most sincere response every time I had to correct him for misbehaving. *"Thank you for correcting me, Ms. Jones"*.

I didn't know what to make of it at first, but before long I became accustomed to hearing those words many times each day.

One morning, my patience was growing thin. When Mark talked out once too often, I made a novice teacher's mistake. I looked at Mark and said, *"If you say one more word, I am going to tape your mouth shut!"* Of course, it wasn't ten seconds later when Chuck blurted out, *"Mark is talking again!"*. I hadn't asked any of the students to help me watch Mark, but since I had stated the punishment in front of the class, I felt I had to act on it.

I remember the scene as if it occurred only this morning. I walked to my desk, very deliberately opened my drawer and took out a roll of masking tape. Without saying a word, I proceeded to Mark's desk, tore off two pieces of tape and made a big X with them over his mouth. I then returned to the front of the room.

As I glanced at Mark to see how he was doing, he winked at me! That did it! I started laughing. The class cheered as I walked back to Mark's desk, removed the tape, and shrugged my shoulders. His first words were, *"Thank you for correcting me, Ms. Jones"*.

At the end of the year, I was asked to teach junior high math. The years flew by and before I knew it Mark was in my 9th grade classroom again. He had grown to be a handsome young man and just as polite as he was in third grade. Since he had to listen carefully to my instructions in beginning algebra, he did not talk as much in ninth grade as he had in third.

One Friday, things just didn't feel right. We had worked hard on a new concept all week, and I sensed that the students were frowning, frustrated with themselves and getting edgy with one another. I had to stop this crankiness before it got out of hand. So I asked them all to list the names of the other students in the room on two sheets of paper. They were to leave a space between each name. Then, I told them to think of the nicest thing they could say about each of their classmates and write it down.

It took the remainder of the class period to finish the assignment and as the students left the room, each one handed me their papers. Charlie smiled and Mark said, *"thank you for teaching me, Ms. Jones, have a good weekend!"*

That Saturday, I wrote down the name of each student on a separate sheet of paper, and I listed what everyone else had said about that individual. On Monday, I gave each student his or her list. Before long, the entire class was smiling, *"Really?"*, I heard whispered, *"I never knew that meant anything to anyone!"* or *"I didn't know others like me so much!"*.

The funny thing was, nobody ever mentioned those papers in class again. I never knew if they discussed them after class or with their parents, but it didn't matter. The exercise had accomplished its purpose. The students were happy with themselves and one another again. That group of students moved on to grade ten and then to graduation.

Several years later, after I returned from a vacation, my parents met me at the airport to drive me home. My mother asked me several questions about my trip, the weather and so forth. Then there was a lull in the conversation and I saw my Mother give my Dad a sideways glance and simply said, *"Dad?"*.

My father then cleared his throat as he always did just before saying something important. "The Eklunds called last night", he began.

"Really?", I said. *"I haven't heard from them in years. I wonder how Mark is doing?"* Dad responded quietly. *"Mark was killed in action in the war (Vietnam), he said. "The funeral is tomorrow, and his parents would like it if you could attend."*

To this day, I can still point to the exact spot on the highway where Dad told me about Mark.

I had never seen a serviceman in a military coffin before. Mark looked so handsome, so mature. All I could think at that moment was, "Mark, I would give all the masking tape in the world if only you would talk to me once more."

The church was packed with Mark's old school buddies. Chuck's sister sang at the funeral. It was so difficult at the graveside. The pastor said the usual prayers, and the bugler played taps and there was a military gun salute. The Eklunds were presented the flag that draped over Mark's coffin. Then, one by one those who loved Mark took a last walk by the coffin and laid a flower upon it.

I was the last one to walk up to his coffin. As I stood there, one of the soldiers who has acted as a pallbearer came up to me and asked, *"Were you Mark's math teacher?"*. I nodded as I continued to stare at the coffin. *"Mark talked about you a lot"* he said.

After the funeral, most of Mark's former classmates headed to Chuck's farmhouse for lunch. Mark's mother and father were there also, obviously waiting for me. *"We want to show you something"* his father said, taking a wallet out of his pocket. *"They found this on Mark when he was killed. We thought you might recognize it."*

Opening the billfold, he carefully removed two worn pieces of notebook paper that had obviously been taped, folded and refolded many times. I knew, without looking that the papers were the ones on which I had listed all the good things each of Mark's classmates had said about him.

"Thank you so much for doing that" Marks' mother said. *"As you can see, Mark treasured it."*

Mark's classmates started to gather around us. Charlie smiled rather sheepishly and said, *"I still have my list. It's in the top drawer of my desk at home"*. Chuck's wife said, *"Chuck asked me to put his in our wedding album" I have mine too, Marilyn said, it's in my diary"*. Then Vicki, another classmate, reached into her pocketbook, took out her wallet and showed her worn and frazzled list to the group. *"I carry this with me at all time"* Vicki said without batting an eyelash. *"I think we all saved our lists"*.

That's when I finally sat down and cried. I cried for Mark and for all his friends who would never see him again and for all those who would never again have the chance to let him know how much they liked him and how much they thought of him.

I write about this important experience as a teacher in order to encourage everyone to take the time to compliment and encourage one another, your friends, loved ones, family and all those you care about.

We too often tend to forget the importance of showing our affections, caring and appreciation of one another; and our love for those closest to us! Sometimes the smallest of things, mean the most to another person.

The days are full and many people come and go in our lives. We forget that the stages in our life will end one day as will life itself. So please, take the time each day to tell the people in your life what you like about them, that they are special and important to you. Tell them before it's too late. You never know when they might most need just that reassurance that others care!



**Mark's third grade class.
With his teacher, Sister Helen Mroska**



Mark Eklund

[Google 'Mark Eklund' for more information & photos of Mark Eklund, his teacher, and his class]

Sample A Letter of Encouragement

Date: _____

Dear _____,

In the course of our busy day-to-day lives, I sometimes forget to let you know all the things you do that make me so proud and happy to have you as my _____. So I thought I'd take this moment to let you know some of the special things I enjoy about you and our relationship.



Cooperation

The Balloon Bop Challenge

Objective:

- Develop cooperation skills
- Develop problem solving abilities in a team effort

Materials:

- Balloons (round shape)

SEL Home Activity:

- Stand holding both of one another's hands. If three or more people participating, stand in a circle holding hands of those on either side. Toss a balloon in the air. The goal is to see how many times you can tap the balloon into the air before it touches the ground. [NOTE: the balloon may be tapped with hands, arms, heads, shoulders, chest or knee but NO feet!]. To succeed everyone has to work cooperatively with no letting go of any hands. All must move together as a team to make sure they do not lose connection of hands. If the balloon hits the ground or someone's foot, the game stops, the score is recorded and then re-start to beat your own record.
- Once proficient, add a second balloon and play to keep both balloons in the air.
- Introduce the mathematical equation for calculating the number of cooperative pairs in any group. Of $Y^2 - Y$ divided by 2. (E.G., if five people are involved in a team task, it would be $5^2 - 5$ divided by 2 or $25 - 5 = 20$ divided by 2 = 10 cooperative pairs). Note that in any team sport there are two teams. This means there is only 1 competitive pair (team A and team B). Now calculate how many cooperative pairs (teammates) are necessary on the field for each team to be successful (e.g. in soccer or American football it's 11 per team or $121 - 11 = 110$ divided by 11 = 55 Cooperative teammate pairs)
- Discuss and explore how players on any team (pick various sports) must cooperate to be successful. What would happen if one or more players decided not to cooperate and did whatever they wanted instead of cooperating with the others?
- Calculate the number of cooperative pairs in your family. How do we cooperate? What would happen if some of us didn't cooperate? How is cooperation important in classroom?, school?, community?
- Create a list of ways in which we all have to cooperate to be successful in our lives (family, workplaces, schools, community, etc.).

Other Possible Family SEL Learning Activities:

- Start a "Family Challenge" to see how many family members can join the game and succeed in keeping the balloon (or balloons) up. Create a chart indicating the "Family Record" with one, two or more balloons. From time to time, get everyone together to try to set a new Family Record.
- Interview various family members, friends, neighbors, etc. as to how people have to cooperate in their workplace in order for the business or organization to be successful.



Responsible Contribution

Lean on Me

Objective:

- Increase awareness of times we all face choices to either help or hurt others in need
- Increase awareness that “I’m not involved” is never really an option in life.
- Develop awareness of how we can contribute to the wellbeing of others

Materials:

- Music and lyrics to the song, “Lean on Me” (see below)
- Choose a book dealing with a true life situation where an individual needed the help of others to survive. (see sample list below)

SEL Home Activity:

- Begin by playing the song, “Lean on Me”. Discuss the meaning of the lyrics.
- Ask, “Who do you ‘lean on’ when you have a problem or are having a difficult time”? “Who has leaned on you for help or support”? “What was the situation and, What did you do”?
- Read together a book that deals with stepping in to help someone having a difficult time in life. (See the list below for younger children as well as older children/teens)
- Have your child write or dictate a story about “A time when I let a friend ‘lean on me’” and “A time wit I needed a friend to lean on”. Parents should write the same stories from their life experience and share you stories together.

Other Possible Family SEL Activities:

- Together identify local groups (e.g., homeless shelter, domestic abuse shelter for families, children’s group home, food bank, nursing home, elderly or disabled neighbor, etc.) who need a lending hand to help them survive and develop a plan for you all to provide support and assistance.
- Arrange an opportunity for your family to participate in a volunteer activity to enrich the lives of those in need... (for more ideas see the book, by Friedman, J. & Roehlkepartain, J. (2010) “*Doing Good Together*”. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Press.).
- Together identify other songs that talk of the need we all have for support from others and create a family play list to listen to together [“Wind Beneath my Wings”, “You Raise me Up”, “You’ve Got a Friend” and so forth]

Sample Books /videos for “Lean on Me”

For Younger Children

“*The Three Questions*” by Jon J. Muth
Shrodes

“*A Chair for my Mother*” by Vera Williams

“*Blizzard*” by John Rocco

“*Have you filled a bucket today*” by C. McCloud

“*The Invisible Boy*” by Patrice Barton

“*Lost and Found Cat*” by Doug Kuntz & Amy

“*I Walk with Vanessa*” by Kerascoet

“*Each Kindness*” by Jacqueline Woodson

“*Those Shoes*” by Maribeth Boelts

For Older Children

Books: “*Human Kind*”: Changing the world one small act at a time” by Brad Aronson

Or, ask your librarian for suggestions

Videos: Georg Duckwitz @ www.facinghistory.org/rescuers/georg-duckwitz

Gino Bartali @ <https://www.facebook.com/HistoryBites/videos/1640624246198290/>

Sir Nicholas Winton: @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0aoifNziKQ>

Internet Search: James Harrison, Norman Borlaug, Christopher Catrambone, Irena Sendler, and other unsung heroes

LEAN ON ME

by Bill Withers

Sometimes in our lives
we all have pain.
We all have sorrow
But if we are wise
We know that there's always tomorrow.

Lean on me when you are not strong.
And I'll be your friend I'll help you carry on
For it won't be long, till I'm gonna need
Somebody to lean on

Please swallow your pride,
if I have things
You need to borrow
For no one can fill, those of your needs
That you won't let show

You can call on me brother
when you need a hand,
We all need somebody to lean on
I just might have a problem,
that you'll understand.
We all need somebody to lean on

Lean on me when you are not strong.
And I'll be your friend I'll help you carry on
For it won't be long, till I'm gonna need
Somebody to lean on

You can call on me brother
when you need a hand,
We all need somebody to lean on
I just might have a problem,
that you'll understand.
We all need somebody to lean on

If there is a road, you have to bear
That you can't carry.
I'm right up the road, I'll share your load.
If you just call me,,, call me
If you need a friend,,, call me
If you need a friend,,, call me
If you ever need a friend,,,,, call me
Call me... call me...

Listen to Bill Withers sing, "Lean on Me" at:

https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-adk-adk_sbnt&hsimp=yhs-adk_sbnt&hspart=adk&p=lean+on+me+lyrics#id=11&vid=154d5670b53144d3e47611667af7a057&action=view